

P 181454Z DEC 08
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9678
FAA EASTERN RGN HQ JAMAICA NY PRIORITY
FAA EUROPE AFRICA MID EAST RGN HQ BRUSSELS BE PRIORITY
FAA NATIONAL HQ WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
INFO DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION WASHDC

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 002840

BRUSSELS FOR TFAZIO
ABU DHABI FOR FAA REP
FAA FOR AFS-50/API/ACG-7
STATE FOR EEB/TRA DMOORE, JBYERLY, KGUSTAVSON

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EAIR ECON IS
SUBJECT: ISRAEL CIVAIR: GOI NOTIFIED OF CAT 2 STATUS

REF: STATE 129874

¶11. (U) SUMMARY: Post notified Director-General of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) Giora Romm on Thursday, December 18 of the Federal Aviation Authority's findings and the designation of Israel as Category 2, Not in Compliance with international standards for aviation safety oversight under the International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA). The letter in reftel was also given to DG Romm. Romm reported to Econcouns on his recent trip to Washington DC, where he met with several Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) key players and attended a two-day conference on international civil aviation. In addition, he also updated Post of the GOI's recent efforts to address the Category 2 rating, including some recent draft legislation that was passed in the Knesset to form an interministerial committee to empower the CAA and expand its budgetary authority. Romm seemed to imply that he was not seeking to resign from his post as Director-General, alluding to rumors of his departure during the upcoming transition in the Israeli government. END SUMMARY.

¶12. (U) Econcouns met with DG of the CAA Giora Romm on December 18 to present the letter from FAA Director of Flight Standards Service James J. Ballough that alerted Israel to the official designation as a Category 2 country. After Romm said that he accepted the letter and its conclusion, he reported on his recent trip to Washington DC to attend an FAA-sponsored conference on international civil aviation and on his meetings with key FAA contacts, in addition to meetings with Department of State and Transport. Romm described the visit as "educational" and stated that he saw the FAA and the CAA as partners. He was pleased that the FAA would be spending considerable time in Israel and mentioned that there were already plans for FAA training in January.

¶13. (U) Romm also detailed his latest efforts to address the civil aviation situation in Israel, including bringing in three outside experts who would be solely dedicated to working on the IASA. He had a small concern regarding whether the Ministry of Transport would agree to his choices for future hires without a public tendering process that could take significant time and delay their recruitment. Romm also reported on two government resolutions that were passed in the Knesset in the beginning of December: one stipulating that by February 1, 2009 an interministerial committee would be formed to strengthen the CAA and expand its authority; and the other that would allow the CAA to recruit employees and handle its own budgetary resources.

¶14. (U) COMMENT: Romm seems quite capable and well-informed of the challenges that lie ahead to improve Israel's CAA and aviation in general. He told Econcouns that he had formed a committee to deal with the contentious Israeli issue of airspace allocation between the Israeli Air Force and Civil Aviation, and was already at work on dealing with regulation of Israel's Unmanned Aviation Vehicles (UAVs), which represents 15 per cent of the world's market. Romm seemed

aware of rumors that he would leave his post with the changeover in the GOI, but emphasized to Econcouns that disturbing the continuity of the CAA at this point would not be in any political party's favor, since aviation safety was so important. Post believes that with continued close working relations between the CAA and FAA, in addition to positive encouragement, Romm will be able to improve the aviation situation in Israel and enact the necessary changes.

Visit Embassy Tel Aviv's Classified Website:

<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/telaviv>

You can also access this site through the State Department's Classified SIPRNET website.

CUNNINGHAM